

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS

IN THE MATTER OF PROTECTING § Entered 8/27/03
PERSONAL PRIVACY IN PUBLIC § GENERAL ORDER NO. 2003-4
CASE FILES §

ORDER

This Order amends General Order No. 2002-9, dated July 22, 2002. It is issued in compliance with the policy of the Judicial Conference of the United States and also Sec. 205 of the E-Government Act of 2002 (Pub. L. No. 107-347). In order to promote electronic access to case files while also protecting personal privacy and other legitimate interests, it is ORDERED that parties shall refrain from including, or shall partially redact where inclusion is necessary, the following personal data identifiers from all pleadings filed with the court, including exhibits thereto, whether filed electronically or in paper, unless otherwise ordered by the Court:

- a. Social Security Numbers. If an individual's social security number must be included in a pleading, only the last four digits of that number should be used.
- b. Names of minor children. If the involvement of a minor must be mentioned, only the initials of that child should be used.
- c. Dates of birth. If an individual's date of birth must be included in a pleading, only the year should be used.

d. Financial account numbers. If financial account numbers are relevant, only the last four digits of these numbers should be used.

While the current Judicial Conference policy allows only limited electronic access in criminal cases, this Order shall nevertheless apply to filings by the parties in criminal cases, absent a showing of compelling reasons to disclose the personal identifiers listed above. For filings in Bankruptcy Court, because of conflicting bankruptcy statutes and rules, this Order shall apply only to personal identifiers b and c, pertaining to names of minor children and dates of birth. The Order does not apply to social security and financial account numbers in Bankruptcy Court filings. Also, this Order does not apply to any cases brought pursuant to Section 205(g) of the Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. §405(g).

Notwithstanding any foregoing provision, however, and in compliance with the E-Government Act, any party wishing to file a document containing the personal data identifiers listed above may file an unredacted document under seal. This document shall be retained by the court as part of the record. The court may, however, still require the party to file a redacted copy for the public file.

The responsibility for redacting these personal identifiers rests solely with counsel and the parties. The Clerk will not review each pleading for compliance with this rule.

DONE at Laredo, Texas, this 27th of August, 2003.

/s/

George P. Kazen

Chief United States District Judge